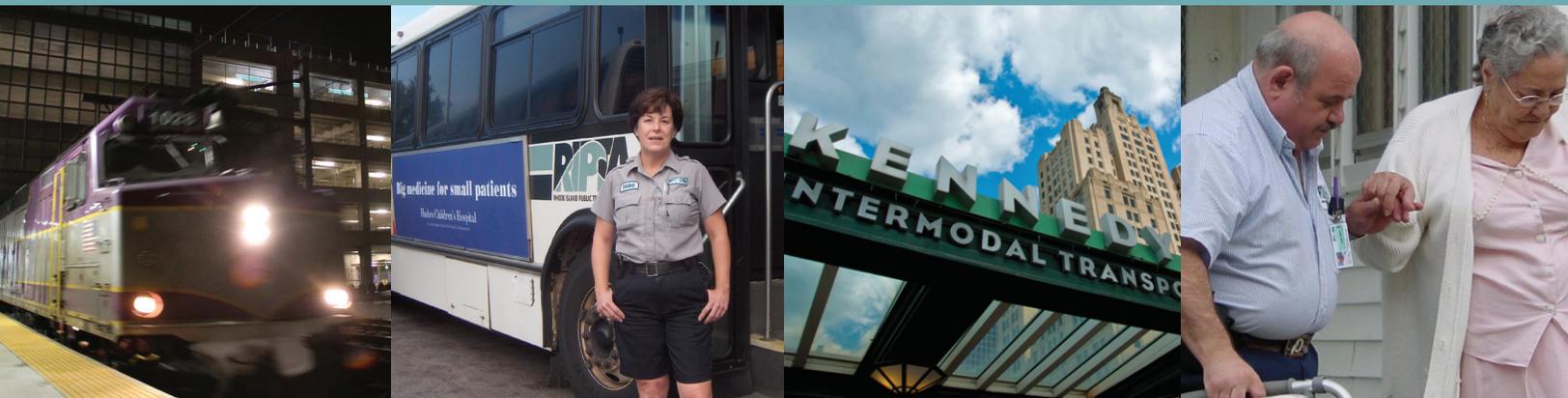


Executive Summary

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TRANSIT IN RHODE ISLAND

RIPTA's Five Year Strategic Plan to Keep Rhode Island Moving



Around the country, people are talking about creating stronger, communities that offer a range of transportation choices, access to jobs, healthy air, and a safe, attractive walking environment.

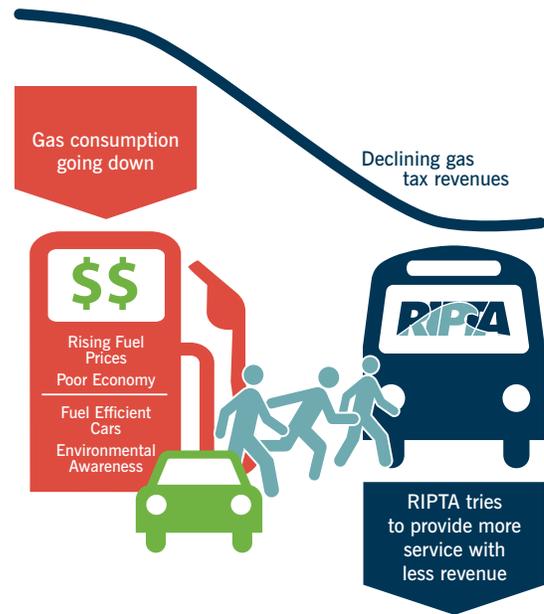
Public transit can play a critical role in helping to achieve these goals: transit takes cars off the road and improves air quality; transit encourages walking and promotes public health; and, transit provides an alternative to owning a car, reducing household expenses while preserving the ability to get where you need to go. Finally, transit investments are proven to attract private investment and promote economic development.

RIPTA has brought positive change to our statewide transit network over the past two decades, making the system more reliable and introducing many new services. As a result, ridership has increased to record levels, reducing traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on our roads while helping our state realize significant economic benefits. Yet, we face our sixth year of declining revenues and have been “doing more with less” for far too long. Our five year Strategic Plan commits to maintaining a strong bus system and improving the passenger experience for our riders. It further establishes a new way of thinking for RIPTA, describing our vision of a more modern transit network for the entire state of Rhode Island.

Together we can keep our buses running and offer a better transportation system for Rhode Island.

Rhode Island's transportation system is the backbone of our economy: it connects our communities and provides access to jobs. But this system, including our transit network, is threatened. Our primary source of operating revenue, the state gas tax yield, has dropped by 9% since 2005. We are now trying to "do more with less", attempting to maintain bus service in the face of declining revenues and higher labor, fuel and health care costs.

The choice is clear: help advance our Strategic Plan as part of a bold new agenda for our state's transportation system as a whole, or continue on the current path with dwindling resources continually stretched to meet the critical mobility needs of our state.



Graphic by: Jeff Nickerson

Our Vision

Imagine a future in which a wide range of multi-modal, convenient, and attractive transportation choices help promote growth, and support thriving, livable communities throughout Rhode Island.

As the state's Mobility Manager, we aim to achieve this vision in a fiscally responsible manner, working with federal, state, local and private partners to realize the benefits a modern transit system can provide and to improve the overall quality of life in Rhode Island.

Goal 1: Serve as Rhode Island's Mobility Manager

Our five year Strategic Plan takes action to further strengthen the role we play as the state's designated Mobility Manager, managing a wide range of transportation choices to meet the diverse travel needs of all Rhode Islanders.

Our route forward:

- Maintain current transit services
- Connect buses, rail, ferrys, bikes and autos
- Think regionally: connect to MA & CT
- Serve individuals with disabilities
- Provide information for all commuters
- Help other state agencies reduce their transportation expenses

In motion:

We will provide easy, direct connections to all commuter rail stations in Rhode Island, welcoming this new service into our statewide transit network.



Photo by: Michael Taylor (michaeltaylor.ca)

Goal 2: Attract More Riders

At RIPTA, we pride ourselves on the progress we've made to enhance the quality and convenience of our services, making fare payment easier, introducing community designed shelters, launching online trip planning, and more. Yet many in Rhode Island have never used our services or are not sure which bus would bring them to work or school. We must continue to introduce new ways to better serve our customers, while marketing the quality and convenience of our services to attract new riders.

Our route forward:

- Provide shelter, seating and other items at key stops
- Make sure information is always within reach
- Use technology to improve service
- Focus on safety, security & customer service
- Promote a better image for transit

In motion:

We will soon hang signs indicating when approaching buses are to arrive. This information will also be available via the internet and mobile phones.



Photo by: Tristen Pelton

Goal 3: Grow our Network to Expand Mobility and Support Economic Growth

Transit is the most practical and environmentally-friendly way to accommodate growing travel needs within our state. With few new roads being built, and traffic congestion increasing, we need a strong transit network to bring commuters, shoppers, tourists and others to their destinations in a timely way. We're expanding our network to meet these needs, to attract more riders, and to support economic growth.

Our route forward:

- Add more bus and Flex services
- Introduce Rapid Bus
- Create new transit hubs
- Redesign Kennedy Plaza
- Build a Providence streetcar system

In motion:

A new mode, Rapid Bus will bring faster and more attractive service to our highest ridership bus routes. The first route will connect Cranston to Pawtucket via downtown Providence.



Image by: AC Transit

Goal 4: Realize the Environmental, Economic & Quality of Life Benefits of Transit

We are working with many partners to make sure our transit dollars support other public investments in transportation, housing and economic development. We pledge to support federal and state policies which improve the quality of life in our communities, and to work locally to improve access to jobs, serve areas targeted for growth, and help private businesses thrive.

Our route forward:

- Create incentives to encourage transit use
- Focus transit services within state-designated growth areas
- Forge win-win partnerships with business
- Serve as a full partner in improving the quality of life in our communities

In motion:

We are working with local businesses and municipalities to encourage commuters to ride the bus and to reduce the need for parking. This saves employers money and brings positive changes to our environment and landscape.



Image by: RIPTA

Goal 5: Identify a Sustainable Funding Strategy

We need a revenue source that allows for growth and doesn't penalize RIPTA when more people shift their commutes to transit.

We applaud the efforts of local leaders who are working to address the transportation funding crisis facing our state. A range of potential new revenue sources are being considered, including many identified by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Funding in 2008. Transit agencies around the country are also considering new taxes, fees, local assessments, tolls or other revenues to maintain operations in the face of fiscal challenges.

Despite declining gas tax revenues, our foremost priority is to maintain bus service and better serve our customers. We will continue to pursue new revenues and find ways to reduce expenses in order to close today's funding gap. We will also continue with planned bus purchases and the installation of new information technologies. Once our funding situation is stabilized, we can begin to add new services and grow our statewide transit network.

Investments in transit can produce great returns in terms of mobility, growth and opportunity for all.

